

**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES  
NEWS RELEASE**



*Sam Cotten, Commissioner  
Scott Kelley, Director*



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Contact:  
Division of Commercial Fisheries  
Area Management Staff  
Phone: (907) 267-2104 or 842-5227  
Fax: (907) 246-3309 or 842-5937

333 Raspberry Rd  
Anchorage, AK 99613  
P.O. Box 230  
Dillingham, AK 99576  
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**2018 BRISTOL BAY SALMON SEASON SUMMARY**

The following is an overview of the 2018 Bristol Bay commercial salmon season. All data are preliminary.

The 2018 inshore Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run of 62.3 million fish is the largest on record dating back to 1893 and was 69% above the 36.9 million average run for the latest 20 year time period. It was the fourth consecutive year that inshore sockeye salmon runs exceeded 50 million fish. The 2018 Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was 21% above the preseason inshore forecast of 51.3 million fish. Runs to all districts, except Egegik, were larger than the preseason forecast. The commercial harvest of 41.3 million sockeye salmon was 10% above the 37.6 million preseason forecast and is the second largest harvest on record. All sockeye salmon escapement goals were met or exceeded, with a total bay-wide escapement of 21.0 million fish. The preliminary harvests for other species are 41,696 Chinook salmon; 1,868,308 chum salmon; 138,466 coho salmon; and 218,998 pink salmon.

***EXVESSEL VALUE***

The 2018 Bristol Bay preliminary exvessel value of \$281million of all salmon species ranks first in the history of the fishery and was 242% above the 20-year average of \$116 million. It was 39% higher than the \$202 million exvessel value of the 1990 harvest, which ranks second. The 43.5 million harvest of all species was the second largest in the history of the fishery, after the 45.4 million fish harvest in 1995. The sockeye salmon harvest of 41.3 million ranks second after the 44.2 million fish harvest, also in 1995. The weight, harvest, and price (Table 1) were used to estimate exvessel value. Prices are an average of post-season processor final operations reports and do not include future price adjustments for icing, bleeding, or production bonuses.

Table 1.–Average price, weight, harvest, and value of salmon harvest in Bristol Bay, 2018.

Species	Price/lb	Weight (lb)	Number of Fish	Total Weight	Value
Sockeye	\$1.26	5.3	41,253,161	218,641,753	\$275,488,609
Chinook	\$0.80	10.4	41,696	433,638	\$346,911
Chum	\$0.36	6.4	1,868,308	11,957,171	\$4,304,582
Pink	\$0.20	3.6	218,998	788,393	\$157,679
Coho	\$0.80	6.6	138,466	913,876	\$731,100
Totals			43,520,629	232,734,831	\$281,028,881

### *ALLOCATION*

Bristol Bay fisheries are managed to achieve allocation between drift and set gillnet gear groups in four of five districts (Table 2). Togiak District is excluded from the allocation plan. Strategies used to achieve allocation between gear groups included varying the amount of fishing time and providing separate gear group openings.

Table 2. Allocation of Bristol Bay drift and set gillnet harvest, 2018.

District	Drift Gillnet	District Set Gillnet	Section Set Gillnet
	Percent of Harvest	Percent of Harvest	Percent of Harvest
	Allocated /Caught	Allocated /Caught	Allocated /Caught
Naknek/Kvichak <sup>a</sup>	84% / 71%	16% / 29%	Naknek: 8% /17% Kvichak: 8% / 12%
Egegik	86% / 81%	14% / 19%	Not applicable
Ugashik	90% / 79%	10% / 21%	Not applicable
Nushagak <sup>b</sup>	74% / 82 %	26% / 18%	Nushagak: 20% 11% Igushik: 6% / 2%

<sup>a</sup> 18% of total harvest occurred in Naknek River Special Harvest Area and is not allocated to gear groups.

<sup>b</sup> Wood River Special Harvest Area harvest was all set net and is included in the 18% listed above.

### *SPECIES PERFORMANCE*

#### Sockeye Salmon

This year’s Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was 21% above the preseason inshore forecast of 51.3 million fish (Table 3). The 2018 harvest of 41.2 million fish was 69% higher than the recent 20-year average for all districts (Table 4). Sockeye salmon escapement goals were met on Kvichak, Alagnak, Egegik, and Ugashik rivers. All other systems exceeded escapement goal ranges (Table 5). In 2018 new benchmarks were established in the Nushagak and Togiak districts which observed the largest sockeye salmon runs on record for those respective districts. The Nushagak District sockeye salmon harvest of 24.1 million fish was the largest single Bristol Bay district harvest on record. Naknek-Kvichak, Egegik, and Ugashik districts (east side) observed the latest run timing on record and because of the disparity in run timing between the Nushagak and the east side districts the processing sector was able to keep pace with the run. The Bristol Bay sockeye salmon run was dominated by fish with one year of freshwater residence (1.2s and 1.3s). Fish with two years of freshwater residence (2.2s and 2.3s) were below preseason expectations, particularly in the Egegik and Kvichak rivers. Sockeye salmon weights for the

2018 season can be characterized in two ways. Fish that had three years of saltwater residence were closer to long term average weights (5.5 to 6 lbs.), while fish with two years of saltwater residence were smaller than long term average weights (3.5 to 4.5 lbs.).

Table 3.—Difference of Bristol Bay sockeye salmon actual inshore run versus forecast, 2018.

District	Inshore Forecast	Inshore Run	% Difference from Forecast
Naknek-Kvichak	16,640,000	16,807,639	1% Above
Egegik	9,120,000	6,567,483	28% Below
Ugashik	2,870,000	3,939,575	37% Above
Nushagak	21,790,000	33,582,975	54% Above
Togiak	860,000	1,370,177	59% Above
Totals	51,280,000	62,267,849	21% Above

Table 4.—2018 preliminary commercial sockeye salmon harvests and 20-year averages by district.

District	1998–2017 Average Sockeye Harvest	2018 Sockeye Salmon Harvest
Naknek-Kvichak	8,013,177	8,606,353
Egegik	6,745,168	4,959,129
Ugashik	2,830,625	2,771,783
Nushagak	6,424,924	24,057,489
Togiak	557,849	858,407
Totals	24,573,116	41,253,161

Table 5.—Bristol Bay sockeye salmon escapement goals and actual escapements, 2018.

River System	Escapement Goal Range	Escapement
Kvichak River	2,000,000–10,000,000	4,398,708
Naknek River	800,000–2,000,000	2,221,152
Alagnak River	320,000 minimum	1,581,426
Egegik River	800,000–2,000,000	1,608,354
Ugashik River	500,000–1,400,000	1,167,792
Nushagak River	370,000–900,000	1,247,460
Wood River	700,000–1,800,000	7,507,254
Igushik River	150,000–400,000	770,772
Togiak River	120,000–270,000	511,770
Total		21,014,688

### Chinook Salmon

Except in the Ugashik District, the 2018 Chinook salmon harvests in Bristol Bay were below average (Table 6). No directed Chinook salmon fishing periods occurred in the Nushagak

District in 2018. Chinook salmon were caught during directed sockeye salmon periods in all commercial districts and a preliminary total of 41,696 fish were harvested, 13% below the 20-year average of 48,161 (Table 6). Chinook salmon escapement into the Nushagak River was 97,239 and within the escapement goal range of 55,000–120,000. The Chinook salmon escapement into the Alagnak River was 998 based on aerial surveys and was below the escapement goal of 2,700.

Table 6.–Chinook salmon preliminary harvest data and 20-year averages by district.

District	1998–2017 Average Chinook Salmon Harvest	2018 Chinook Salmon Harvest
Naknek/Kvichak	1,678	1,330
Egegik	636	335
Ugashik	900	1,073
Nushagak	38,461	35,243
Togiak	6,227	3,715
Totals	48,161	41,696

### Chum Salmon

The 2018 preliminary Bristol Bay chum salmon harvest was 1,868,308 fish (Table 7) compared to the latest 20-year average (1998–2017) of 983,118 chum salmon. Nushagak District was the largest producer of chum salmon, where 1,192,060 fish were harvested.

### Pink Salmon

Pink salmon return to Bristol Bay in even years. The preliminary harvest in 2018 was 218,998 fish which is 55% percent below the 20-year average (for even yeas only) of 488,383 pink salmon. The majority of pink salmon returning to Bristol Bay are harvested in the Togiak and Nushagak districts.

### Coho Salmon

The preliminary coho salmon harvest in 2018 was 138,466 fish (Table 7). Typically, the Nushagak District is the largest coho salmon producer and accounted for 74,317 fish which was above the 20-year average.

### Acknowledgements

The department would like to thank the Bristol Bay Fisheries Collaborative (BBFC) for funding assistance in 2018. The BBFC began in 2016 and is an agreement between ADF&G and the Bristol Bay Science and Research Institute (BBSRI) to work together with stakeholders to restore a world class fisheries management system and raise funds to support and maintain it. This agreement is supported by ADF&G, drift and set gillnet fishermen, processors, municipalities, villages, support industries, and other stakeholders. A list of organizations that committed financial support to the BBFC in 2018, as well as additional information about this agreement can be found at <https://www.bbsri.org/bbfc>.

In 2018, BBFC funding and resources were responsible for the deployment of a second boat in the Port Moller Test Fishery. The use of a second test fishing vessel provided the opportunity to document the migratory path of Bristol Bay sockeye salmon well beyond the historically fished locations.

Table 7.—Preliminary 2018 Bristol Bay salmon harvest and escapement by district and species.

District	Sockeye	Chinook	Chum	Pink	Coho	TOTAL
Naknek-Kvichak Catch	8,606,353	1,330	314,872	16,858	6,503	8,945,916
Escapement-KvichakTwr.	4,398,708	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	4,398,708
Naknek Twr.	2,221,152	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	2,221,152
Alagnak Twr.	1,581,426	998 <sup>a</sup>	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,582,424
Naknek-Kvichak Subtotal	16,807,639	2,328	314,872	16,858	6,503	17,148,200
Egegik Catch	4,959,129	335	110,763	341	14,755	5,085,323
Escapement-Egegik Twr.	1,608,354	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,608,354
Egegik Subtotal	6,567,483	335	110,763	341	14,755	6,693,677
Ugashik Catch	2,771,783	1,073	91,376	0	0	2,864,232
Escapement-Ugashik Twr.	1,167,792	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	1,167,792
Ugashik Subtotal	3,939,575	1,073	91,376	0	0	4,032,024
Nushagak Catch	24,057,489	35,243	1,192,060	135,126	74,317	25,494,235
Escapement- Wood Twr.	7,507,254	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	7,507,254
Igushik	770,772	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	770,772
Nushagak	1,247,460	97,239	811,283	N.A.	111,455	2,267,437
Nushagak Subtotal	33,582,975	132,482	2,003,343	135,126	185,772	36,039,698
Togiak Catch	858,407	3,715	159,237	66,673	42,891	1,130,923
Escapement - Togiak Twr.	511,770	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	511,770
Togiak R. & Trib.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Kulukak	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Togiak Subtotal	1,370,177	3,715	159,237	66,673	42,891	1,642,693
Bristol Bay Catch	41,253,161	41,696	1,868,308	218,998	138,466	43,520,629
Bristol Bay Escapement	21,014,688	98,237	811,283	N.A.	111,455	22,035,663
Bristol Bay Total Run	62,267,849	139,933	2,679,591	218,998	249,921	65,556,292

<sup>a</sup> From post season aerial survey.